

Committee of the Whole
February 24, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Council members in attendance: Thaddeus Hoffmeister, Al Delgado, Zach Green, Jim O'Reilly, Sarah Stankorb Taylor, Jeff LeRoy, and Nancy Averett

Staff members in attendance: Rusty Herzog – Police Chief, Megan Statt Blake – Assistant Community Development Director, Lynn Tetley – City Manager, Mike Lippert – Assistant Public Works Director, Terry Huxel – Public Works Director, Rachel Leininger – Recreation and Citizen Engagement Director, Jeremiah Caudill – Finance Director, Tana Pyles – Community Development Specialist, and Emily Supinger – City Solicitor

Others present: Tony Shadwick – Penchura, Patrick Walker – ESC member and resident, Sophia Holley (Keating, Muething & Klekamp), Megan Anderson – Resident, Mary, David, Joseph, Patrick, and Maggie Gaffey – Residents, Jon Boss – Resident, and Katie Lawrence – ESC member and resident

Crescent Park Playground Update

Ms. Stankorb Taylor provided a brief history about this project. This initially began as a discussion about adding a playscape at Chisholm Park but then became a discussion about adding a universally accessible playground at Crescent Park. This location was much more desirable for this use due to parking, access, proximity to businesses, etc. The Buildings and Equipment Committee engaged local families with children of diverse needs to help with the design concept and layout. At that same time, a local donor pledged \$60,000 toward this project. Then the City was able to make a request to the State of Ohio Capital Appropriation process in the amount of \$150,000. This request has been selected for funding and is pending legislative approval. The City is also seeking other private donations, grants, and in-kind donations. Mr. Shadwick provided an overview of the proposed design. This design includes activities for mobility users, sensory disorders, etc. A power point presentation showing the proposed design concept was shown. Ms. Gaffey provided information about existing playgrounds in the region and how they are not conducive for families with children with varying ability. This concept would be a regional draw. The Village of Lockland and Village of Woodlawn submitted letters of support for the state appropriation. Additionally, playgrounds such as this can serve as an economic driver in a community as it brings new visitors to an area. The total cost estimate for the structure is \$421,323. The City has raised \$61,850 in private donations and is pending receipt of \$150,000 from the State of Ohio. The City will also apply for CDBG funding in the amount of \$115,000 in 2021. Other grant applications and private solicitations will be made throughout the balance of 2020. Mr. Green asked if the structure could be built in phases to allow some features to be constructed this year. Mr. Shadwick said this is possible, with some additional costs such as freight and 10% more the surface if it is phased. The request before City Council is support for the project and additional grant applications and private

solicitations. Ms. Averett asked if a garden component could be added to the area. Ms. Tetley also stated there was a desire to add a shelter to this area to supplement the playground feature. Council consensus was to support this project. An update will be provided in the next few months regarding the finalized design and funding.

Junk Day Alternatives

Mr. Walker provided an update from the Environmental Stewardship Commission regarding their thoughts on Junk Day. The Commission is interested in eliminating this pickup due to the cost and the opportunity to divert these items to reuse, recycling, or upcycling. The city disposes of over 100 tons of trash each year at a cost of \$18,000. ESC would like the City to demonstrate leadership in terms of reducing waste. ESC is requesting support from City Council to investigate opportunities to eliminate this program or at least, substantially reduce the use of this day. Mr. O'Reilly stated there may be a need to educate Rumpke drivers to be sure to pick up the "one large item" allotted to each resident on regular trash pickup day. At this point, ESC is hoping to start with a specific education program to help eliminate the use of this day. Mr. Huxel stated that any reduction in the use of this special collection day would reduce the actual cost to the City and will divert this waste from the landfill. The City pays for this service on an hourly collection basis. Council agreed there will be substantial community pushback if this service is eliminated, but all supported the notion of looking at ways to reduce the tonnage disposed of on this day. Mr. Huxel stated there is not a plan to eliminate this program from the City's contract with Rumpke, but the City could reduce the amount of junk set out on this day.

Sidewalk Task Force

Mr. LeRoy discussed interest he has heard from the community in investigating adding sidewalks on Mt. Pleasant and Compton. He is proposing a Task Force to look at these projects, including looking at funding options. Mr. O'Reilly stated that he has heard both support and opposition to these sidewalks. Mr. LeRoy will submit a memo to the Mayor with the names to serve on this group.

Tennis Court Reconstruction

Mr. O'Reilly was concerned about the tone of the article in Wyoming Living, in that it stated this project was going to move forward. He feels the City should provide a response for the readers of the magazine. Mr. LeRoy stated the tennis court is in the 2021 CIP, pending grant funding and financial participation by the school. Mr. Delgado didn't feel a response was needed because the article was accurate. No action was taken.

Reduced Density Overlay Zoning Code Provisions

Ms. Supinger provided a handout of the proposed changes to Chapter 1157 of the Planning and Zoning Code, related to Reduced Density Overlay Plans. An explanation of the proposed changes was provided, including how the overlay is approved (legislative and not administrative) and how changes could be made to these existing designations (minor

modifications only). Mr. O'Reilly suggested that City staff meet with Ms. Pepper to assure her this change does not predispose any planned changes to the Stearns property. Mr. Delgado asked if a WUW article would be released. Ms. Supinger felt this was not far reaching enough to warrant an article (only one property is impacted by this type of overlay currently). Ms. Supinger reminded City Council that this does not change anything in place now. If there is a future request to modify the overlay on the Stearns Property, there is a notice requirement included in that modification process. Ms. Holley (attorney for Ms. Landers) commented that this property is six acres in size and the home has over 10 bedrooms. It's too cumbersome for the Landers family to maintain and it is not marketable for the value price. The Landers family does support this Zoning Code change. A public hearing will be held at the March City Council meeting.

Increasing Diversity in Commission Members

Ms. Averett asked for a gender and diversity breakdown of all boards and commissions. Ms. Tetley stated that vacancies are posted on the city website and included in the weekly city e-news (when vacancies occur). Ms. Tetley provided the current board and commission membership spreadsheet to each member of City Council. Ms. Stankorb Taylor stated there is a list available from Women's Fund of Greater Cincinnati available of women interested in volunteering. Ms. Averett suggested having a diversity list to choose from before selecting from elsewhere. Mr. Delgado suggested the council representative from each board and commission should relay these opportunities for filling vacancies to the rest of Council.

Miscellaneous

A hearing will be held on Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at the County Courthouse regarding the proposed assessments for the Mill Creek Conservancy District.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Approved:

Thaddeus Hoffmeister, Mayor